№ 382 - Grouno

Strange and Wonderful News from

ITALY,

OR,

A True and Impartial Relation of the Travels, Adventures, and Martyrdome of four eminent

Quakers of York-shire.

Who in the Year 1672. Travelled through *France*, *Italy* and *Turky* to propagate their Religion.

Wherein is fully and faithfully declared the Designs, Endeavours and Attempts of these zealous *Quakers* for the Convertion of the

TURK and POPE.

With a summary account of the event and success of the business, and of all the most remarkable occurrents. As also a faithful Narrative of their private discourses, conferences and disputes which passed between these *Quakers* and the *Pope*, the *Cardinal Nephew* and *Cardinal Barbarini*.

ALSO

Of their Voyage to *Constantinople*, and of their most barbarous, cruel and bloody death by the special command of the *Mufti* and the *Vizier Bassa*.

Faithfully and compendiously related by *Elias Wilson* Esquire, who was an eye-witness to a great part of these transactions.

LONDON,

Printed by *John Lock*, living in the *Long Walk* near *Christ-Church* Hospital, over against the sign of the Drawers. 1673.

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IT was towards the end of *March* in the year 1672. that *John Watſon*, *William Stubbs*, *Nathaniel Golden*, and *Rowland Jenkins*, all of *Yorkſhire*, and eminently known in that County to be *Leading-men* among the *Quakers*: *It* was *I* ſay, about that time that theſe men ſaid they had the *ſpirit of Burning* and the *Holy Anointing* in them, and were called and ſent by God to preach the *everlaſting Goſpel* to the *Nations* and *Heathens*. And they ſaid that the *child Jeſus* within them had aſſured them of great ſucceſs, and that the Lord would be wonderfully with them in this *Diſpenſation*, that they ſhould break the *Bread of Life* to the Nations, and that the *Springs of Life* ſhould break forth out of their Bellies. *It* is a wonder to ſee what ſtrange effects and boldneſs theſe *Enthuſiaſtical perſwaſions* and *Phanatical Dreams* cauſed in theſe poor Men. They were now ſwelled with hopes and expectation of Wonders. They now reſolved to leave *England* and embark for *France*, and begin this *great Work* of converting *Nations* and *Heathens*.

Reader, *I* do intend to give you a true and impartial account of theſe mens actions in Forreign parts, as *I* have received it from their own mouths, and alſo been fully and faithfully informed by ſeveral other Perſons of known worth and integrity, who were eye-witneſſes to the ſame.

John Watſon was a *Gentleman* of a pretty conſiderable Eſtate, and had been well educated, he had ſpent ſome years at *Univerſity* and had alſo formerly been a Traveller into *France*, *Spain* and *Italy*, all which Languages he throughly underſtood, and ſpake very fluently. The other three were plain Country-men, and knew no other language but their own, but fully perſwaded themſelves they ſhould have the *Gift of Tongues*, and be indued with power from above.

It is not my intent to write a *Journal* of theſe mens actions, for that would ſwell this little Pamphlet into a huge book. *I* intend only to relate ſome of the moſt ſignal and moſt remarkable of their affairs and tranſactions, which *I* heard from their own mouths when *I* was in *Italy*, and which have been alſo related and atteſted by other Perſons of known integrity.

In Eaſter-week they took Shipping at *Dover*, and were ſoon wafted over to *Calis*. *I* find not that they had any *Impulſe* of Spirit to ſay or attempt any thing, but that they travelled on very peaceably and quietly, paying for what they had, and ſo came to the great City *Paris*, where they ſpent 2 days only and then advanced towards *Lyons*, where they continued about a Fortnight. Here it was that the tumultuous ſpirit began firſt to exert and ſhew it ſelf to the *French Nation*. On *April* 27 *William Stubbs* ſaid he had received a command from God to ſpeak, and he ſignified as much to *John Watſon* and the reſt On the next day which was Sunday, about 10 of the Clock in the Forenoon they went all 4 to the great *Cathedral*, or St. *Johns Church*, where they were cele-

celebrating *high Mass* (as they call it) about the middle of the *Mass William Stubbs* on a sudden climbs over the rails and goes up to the high Altar, where as he was beginning his Discourse in *English* (for as yet he had not received his *Gift of Tongues*) the *Church Officers* presently lay hands on him and carry him out, and commit him to Prison until the next day. On *Monday* the Officers have him before the Magistrate, who refuses to meddle in this case, but causes him forthwith to be sent to the Arch-Bishop. The Arch-Bishop is highly offended with him for his bold attempt, and resolves to punish him with all severity imaginable, he remits him to Prison, and orders that the next day at 10 of the Clock in the Morning, he be brought before him again. On *Tuesday* he is strictly examined what his intentions were, & how he durst be so bold to commit so great a crime in so publick and confident a manner; His answers were altogether impertinent, and withall so insolent and sawcy, that the Bishop sent him to the *House of Correction* where he was soundly lasht. On *Friday* morning the Bishop ordered him to be brought before him again, and seemed to be much incensed against this poor *Phanatick*, Now the reason why his *Grace* was so fierce against this poor Man was, because some of his Servants had malitiously suggested to him that he was set on and encouraged to offer this publick affront to their Divine Service by some of the *Hugonot Ministers*: which was a most malitious untruth, for as yet these *Quakers* had not had any the least correspondence or converse with any Protestant in *France*, as they did all very soberly attest to me in *Italy*. The Bishop was resolved to give him a full hearing, and to sift the business to the bottom. He asked him if he was not set on to do this irreverent action by the *Hugonot Ministers*? He replyed no, he was moved by the Spirit of God within him, and that it was the *Spirit of Burning* and the *Holy Anointing* that had caused him to do what he had done. And here he entred into a long discourse, telling the *Arch-Bishop*, and the *Canons* who were there present, that the Law of God was written upon Mens hearts, and that now the time was come that they should all be taught of God: Now the Lords people were all to be Prophets, they were all to have fresh springs arise in their hearts. And that the Lord had sent him and three Friends more into these parts to break the bread of Life to the Nations, to open the hidden Mysteries of Christs Kingdom, to overthrow the *Babylonish Practices* of *Rome*, to break the Serpents Head, and wound the great *Leviathan*.

The *Arch-Bishop*, the *Canons*, and the whole Company were much astonished at this Mans confidence, and his wild and Fanatick discourse and answers, and began now to relent, and to pitty this poor Man, and look upon him as a mad-man and one out of his senses, & so accordingly gave order to have him to the Hospital of *mad people*, and there carefully to be looked after until he gave further order.

About a week after this, 3 *English Gentlemen* hearing what had passed, and how that an *Englishman* who was mad was committed to the Hospital of *mad*

men:

Inn: The Gentlemen went immediately to the Hospital to enquire the truth of the matter, when they came the Keeper very courteously informed them of the whole business, brought them to the sight of *Stubbs*; who was locked up in a small Cell by himself alone, and an iron Chain about his Leg, and his head shaved, (for it is the custome here to shave all mad people.) When the Gentlemen came in they found him sitting in a melancholly sullen posture: he would not so much as look up or speak one word to them for the space of above an hour and half, notwithstanding they spoke very kindly to him, and asked him concerning his condition. and the causes of his distemper, and promised him all the assistance & kindness that lay in their power. At last this sullen Spirit was overcome, and he began to enter into a long discourse of the spirit within him, and that God had sent him and his 3 Friends to break in pieces the great *Leviathan* of *Rome*. Now the Gentlemen quickly perceived his Spirit, and plainly discovered him to be no *mad-man* but a *Quaker*. They asked him concerning his other Friends where they were? And withall promised to do their utmost for his releasment, and so giving the Keeper some Money to be kind to their Country-man they bid him farewel. At Evening they went to the *Inn* to visit the other 3 *Quakers*, and had much discourse with them, endeavouring to perswade them to desist from this so hazardous and fruitless an enterprize, and speedily to return to their own Country, demonstrating the great dangers and inconveniences they would thrust themselves upon if they did still persist or any farther prosecute this fond and ridiculous undertaking; and so they parted. The next day they addressed to the Arch-Bishop, who was pleased to entertain them with much civility and respect. They returned humble thanks to his *Grace* for his great care of their Country-man, in sending him to such a place where he was so well accommodated in all thing in order to his cure, and withall represented to his Grace his condition, quality and Religion, and how that he was not a *mad-man* but one of those *Sectarians* which in *England* are called *Phanaticks* and *Quakers*. And withall informed the Arch-Bishop and Canons how that party do desire to appear different from all others in their manner of speech, their apparel, and manners. And also humbly petitioned his Grace for a releasment, promising within a day or two to dispatch them out of the Town; The Arch-Bishop readily condescended to all their demands, and presently gave order that *Stubbs* should be set at liberty, which was accordingly performed. And the day following they all 4 left the Town, and hasted their journey to *Italy*.

When they came to *Milano* in *Italy*, they had another enthusiastical impulse of Spirit. And now *John Watson*, *Nathaniel Calden* and *Rowland Jenkins*, who hitherto had been silent, or (as they expressed it themselves) *humbly waiting at the Feet of Jesus*, who had now given them command to begin to preach the *Everlasting Gospel* to the *Italians*. Here *Stubbs* accompanied with his 3 friends did now (as formerly at *Lyons* in *France*) upon *Sunday*

enter

enter the *Dumo* or *Cathedral* of the City, and made a great and publick disturbance when they were in the height of their solemnities. *Watson* began to make a discourse in *Italian*, but was presently seized and carried forth, and had before a Magistrate, who forthwith committed them all 4 to Prison, but withall gave order they should be civilly used and lack for nothing until further order. About 4 or 5 days after, they were commanded to appear before the *Governour* of *Milan* himself who was resolved to have a full account of the matter. The Governour when he saw their uncivil behaviour, their sullen looks, and heard their wild discourses, he presently concluded them *mad-men*, and gave order to have them confined and carefully looked after, and also appointed 2 Physitians to visit them and to do their utmost for their recovery. The Physitians presently made a visit to the Hospital and had a long discourse with *Watson* (who spoke *Italian* well) And then returned to the Governour to give him their sentiment of the business, they told his Excellence that they were mad, as did evidently appear to them by their very countenance and manner of discourse: and that one of them, (meaning *Stubbs*) had a manifest and signal token of his distemper, *viz.* his head was shaved according to the usual practice of all Physitians in the World, who always use to shave madmen thereby to cool the brain, and for the more comodious applying fomentations and other proper Remedies for the Head, the seat and subject of the distemper. They added also that they did verily believe they were *Dutchmen* who had made an escape from their Keepers. The Governour was well satisfied with this account the Physitians gave of the *Quakers*, and accordingly ordered them to take care of them, and let no means be wanting, that might be used for their recovery, and that they should be used with all tenderness imaginable. The 2 Doctors return to the *Pazzi* or *mad-men*, and cause them to be shaved and purged, and the next day they bleed them all in the arms & feet, & every day twice a day cause their heads to be bathed with cold water, and their whole bodies also in a pond made for that use only. Here the poor *Quakers* went through a rigorous course of Physick: for in 2 months time they were let blood about 17 or 18 several times, besides frequent and violent purgings. *Golden* a fortnight after he had been thus confined, forbore eating, whether it was out of a sullen dogged humour, or out of an enthusiasme or expectation of *new Revelations*, I cannot certainly affirm, but by his wilfull and contumacious abstinence he gave up the Ghost and died after he had been a month thus shut up. The other 3 by bleeding and purging were brought very low, the Physitians now were much troubled & disheartned, and did altogether despair of their recovery, and did signifie as much to the Governour withall telling his Excellence that they supposed it was some *Religious melancholy* by that these men were afflicted with, & that it was insuperable & not to be overcome by any Art, & so desired the Governour to release them, which was accordingly performed. After they had regained their liberty, they continued some days in the Town and

and would frequently make ſpeeches in the Churches, and exhort the people to imbrace their Doctrine and follow the Light which was within them. The *Italians* after their enlargement were very civil to them, and if at any time they cauſed any diſturbance in the Church, the Officers would gently force them out, without uſing any manner of rigour or ſeverity to them. For the whole City looked upon them as 3 diſtracted men, ſo whatſoever they ſaid or did was looked upon, as proceeding from the Diſtemper of their brain, and civilly connived at and paſſed over without any notice.

Towards the beginning of *June* they left *Milano* and ſet forward for *Rome*. For their chief deſign was to go thither, to convert the *great Leviathan* (as they uſually called the *Pope*) and to reform *Babilon*. I heard not of any conſiderable action in their Journey from *Milan* to *Rome*; but you may imagine by their bald Sculls and moroſe carriage what thoughts the people had of them, for now whereſoever they came the people looked upon them as men diſtracted and mad: ſome were afraid of them, others laughed at and derided them, no body at all regarded any thing they ſaid,

June the 18 they came to *Rome* the place they ſo much deſired to ſee, upon the *Sunday* following they according to their old Cuſtome entred a little Church called *San Jacomo Scozza Cavelli*, where *Watſon* made a fierce and zealous diſcourſe againſt the *Babiloniſh Idolatry* of that City, and ſaid that the *Pope* who was the *Man of Sin* and the *great Leviathan* was now to be cruſhed in pieces, and God had ſent them from the utmoſt parts of the Earth to convert that City, and to confound the *Pope* and all his *Adherents*, and that now all mankind was to expect and ſeek for the *holy Anointing*, for they were all to be taught of God, and not any longer to follow Monks and Prieſts, who were all falſe Prophets, and that now God would pour out the full Vials of his wrath and fierce indignation upon them, and bring them all to utter ruine ſhame and confuſion. I know the Reader will admire to hear that the *Romans* were ſo patient, and let them run on ſo long in theſe diſcourſes, and not cauſe them to be carried out of the Church and puniſhed for this diſturbance. But the reaſon of this connivance was not for want of zeal, but becauſe the Church and Congregation was very ſmall, ſo that the people were affrighted and all kept at a good diſtance, for by their very looks and manner of diſcourſe the people generally concluded them 3 Bedlams, and were greatly afraid of them, until at laſt one who had more courage and reſolution then the reſt, went and fetcht ſome Officers and put them into the inquiſition as *Hereticks*. But thoſe of the inquiſition ſoon rid their hands of them, and the ſame day towards Evening ſet them at liberty, ſaying that it was their buſineſs only to take notice of *Hereticks* and not of *mad-men*. The next day which was the great ſolemnity of St, *John Baptiſt*, they cauſed the ſame diſturbance in the great *Dome*, that famous and renowned Church of St, *Peter*, but here they were quickly carried out, but no other ſeverity uſed, becauſe all the world now looked upon them as *mad-men*,

I am weary of relating these frantick attempts and discourses which they made in several of the Churches of *Rome*, and so shall pass by a great many of them in silence, and come to their attempts upon the *Pope* himself. They went to the *English Colledge* and desired the Governours assistance to bring them to the presence of the *Pope*. The Governour refused to meddle in that matter, alledging the dangerous consequents of it, that it would not only bring particular ruine to themselves, but would also be a shame and reproach to the *English Nation* it self: Wherefore he earnestly prssed and urged them to desist from that dangerous attempt, and return home. Hereupon the *Quakers* fell in a great passion, and told him that he savoured not the things of God, but was yet wholly carnal, and that he was like *Herod*, and with him went about as much as in him lay to murder the *child Jesus*, and to hinder the peoples conversion from *Idolatry*, and embracing the *everlasting Gospel*, and so in great discontent they left him.

The conference of Cardinal Barbarini with the English Quakers, and how he brought them before the Pope.

These poor *Quakers* had not been a month in *Rome* but the whole City took great notice of them; and generally condoled their condition, as being distracted and far from their own Country, *July* 6 *Cardinal Barbarini*, hearing much of these mens frantick actions, was very desirous out of curiosity to see them, and to discourse with them, hereupon he caused them to be before him, and was pleased with much patience to discourse an hour with them, and then civilly dismissed them, and sent them to their Lodgings. About two days after he made report to the *Cardinal Nephew* and to the *Pope* himself of what had happened, and of the strange and unparelleld enthusiasms of these 3 English *Pazzi* (for so he always termed them) and how they had a great desire to have some conference with his Holiness, and that they affirmed that God had sent them to deliver some secret Revelations to him. The Pope at first was a little surprized with the novelty and strangeness of the thing, and gave order to have them privately brought before him and these 2 Cardinals. When they were admitted into the presence, *Watson* saluted the Pope with this address. *Art thou that Man of Sin, that Antichrist and great Leviathan, Verily God hath raised us up from the utmost parts of the earth to preach the everlasting Gospel to thee, and to convert thee from thy Idolatry, Errours and sinful ways, unto the true way and to the Light, &c.* The Pope was much amazed at this strange confidence and prodigious boldness, and did really believe that the common report had not at all belyed them, but that they were very much distempered in their minds, and distracted, and gave a strict command that none should offer any violence to them, but with all privately appointed some of the *English Colledge* to perswade them to return home, or else to take charge of them in their Colledge, and not let them thus run

run about the City, disturbing the people. The business was effected according to the Popes desire, for about the end of *July* seeing how unsuccessfull their endeavours had been they resolved to leave that *Babylonian City*, and go preach the Gospel to the *Turks* and *Mahometans*. In order thereunto they took Shipping for *Constantinople*, where after two months tossing upon a dangerous and tempestuous Sea they at length safely arrived.

They had not been above a fortnight in that great City, but they went into the *Mahometans Mosco's* and *Temples*, and caused great tumult among the People. For this offence they were condemned to be bastinado'd, *i. e.* to receive 300 blows upon the soals of their Feet, which was accordingly executed with the extremity of rigour and cruelty, so that in few days the putrified flesh came off from the bones, which was a miserable spectacle to behold, But this spirit of *Fanaticism* had so transported and infatuated them, that they got wooden crutches, and once more went to their prophane *Mosco's*, and caused a much greater disturbance then before. Hereupon the *Turks* were exceedingly incensed, and presently had them before the *Mufti* himself, who forthwith in a great fury and rage passed this cruel sentence upon them, *viz.* That they were to have their hands chopt off, their tongues cut out, their eyes bored out, and each man to have a sharp wooden stake run in at his Fundament and so quite through his body, all which was accordingly put in execution. And so these poor wretches after all their sufferings ended their miserable Life. This rashness of these *Quakers* had like to drew a great storm upon all the *English* Merchants who were in great danger of having their Estates and Goods seized by the *Janisaries*, but that the *English Ambassador* nobly and notably bestirred himself, and gave the *Vizier Bassa* a full and satisfactory account of the whole matter.

Conclusion.

Reader, in this short account of these Mens actions, *I* have not studied to set it out with eloquence and ornament, but *I* have wholly and only aimed at truth, resolving to give you a true and impartial Narrative of the whole business. *I* was well acquainted with these Men in *Italy*, and had often conference with them. And of some things *I* was informed by others. As concerning their actions and true death in *Turky I* received a full account by Letter when *I* was at *Venice* from two of my Friends and faithful correspondents resident in *Constantinople*, who were eye-witnesses of their cruel and most barbarous deaths. Whose Letters *I* have still by me, and am willing and ready at any time to exhibit them to the view and perusal of any who shall desire a more full account of this matter.

FINIS.